

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 6-36, and replace claims 37-48 with the following amended claims. In accordance with the newly instituted revised amendment format, a complete set of claims follows, with new material to be added to the claims shown as underlined, and material to be deleted shown as ~~struck through~~.

Claims 1-36. (Cancelled)

37. (Amended) An isolated ~~naturally occurring protein encoded by a variant of a full-length human protection of telomere-1 (hPot 1) transcript~~ polypeptide encoded by a polynucleotide that hybridizes under high stringency conditions to the polynucleotide set forth in SEQ ID NO: 12 or the complement thereof, wherein said polypeptide binds single-stranded telomeric DNA, and wherein said polypeptide is not the amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO: 13.

38. (Amended) ~~The protein according to claim 37, wherein said variant has~~ An isolated hPot 1 polypeptide having the amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO: 15.

39. (Amended) The ~~protein~~ polypeptide according to claim 38, wherein said ~~variant~~ polypeptide is encoded by the polynucleotide set forth in SEQ ID NO: 14.

40. (Amended) ~~The protein according to claim 38, wherein said variant has~~ An isolated human Pot 1 polypeptide having at least 85% amino acid sequence identity to SEQ ID NO: 15, wherein said polypeptide binds single-stranded telomeric DNA, and wherein said polypeptide is not the amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO: 13.

41. (Amended) The ~~protein~~ polypeptide according to claim 38 ~~40~~, wherein said ~~variant~~ polypeptide differs from SEQ ID NO: 15 by no more than about 20 single amino acid substitutions, deletions or insertions, ~~and wherein said variant binds single-stranded telomeric DNA.~~

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42. (Amended) ~~The protein according to claim 37, wherein said variant has~~ An isolated hPot 1 polypeptide having the amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO: 17.

43. (Amended) The ~~protein~~ polypeptide according to claim 42, wherein said ~~variant~~ polypeptide is encoded by the polynucleotide set forth in SEQ ID NO: 16.

44. (Amended) ~~The protein according to claim 42, wherein said variant has~~ An isolated human Pot 1 polypeptide having at least 85% amino acid sequence identity to SEQ ID NO:17, wherein said polypeptide binds single-stranded telomeric DNA, and wherein said polypeptide is not the amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO: 13.

45. (Amended) The ~~protein~~ polypeptide according to claim 42 ~~44~~, wherein said ~~variant~~ polypeptide differs from SEQ ID NO:17 by no more than about 20 single amino acid substitutions, deletions or insertions, ~~and wherein said variant binds single-stranded telomeric DNA.~~

46. (Amended) The ~~protein~~ polypeptide according to claim 37, wherein said ~~variant~~ polypeptide is a splicing variant.

47. (Amended) A fragment of said ~~variant~~ polypeptide according to claim 37, wherein said fragment binds single-stranded telomeric DNA.

48. (Amended) The fragment according to claim 47, wherein said fragment ~~encodes~~ comprises the amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO: 5.